

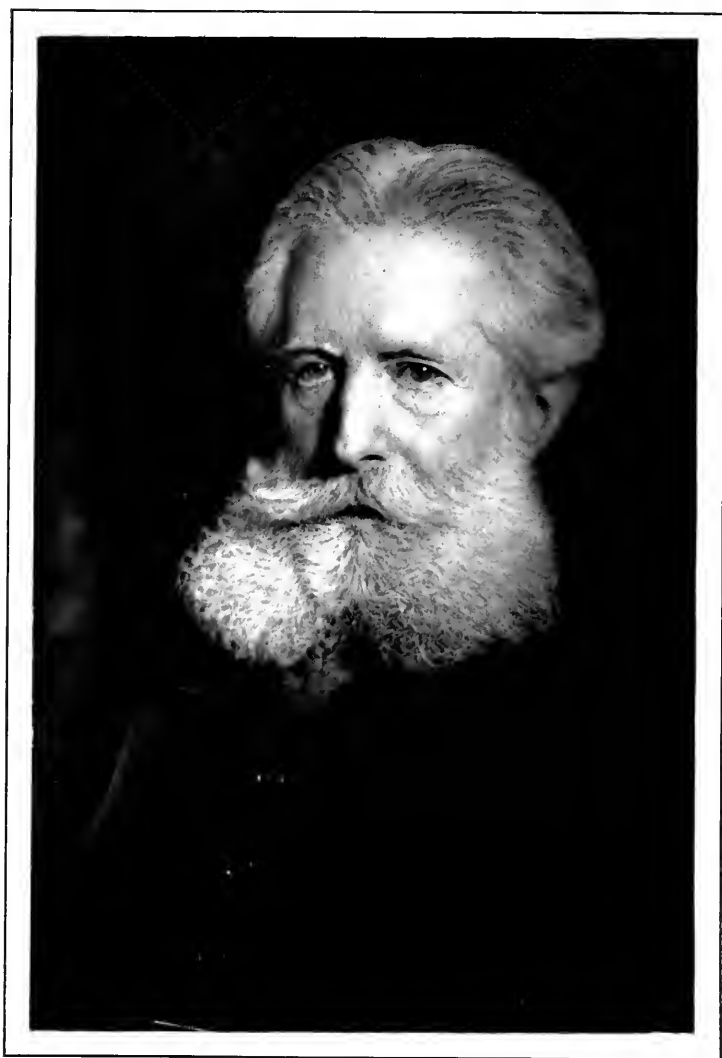
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IN MEMORY OF
EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

A MEETING
HELD AT
CARNEGIE LYCEUM, NEW YORK

ON THE AFTERNOON OF
JANUARY 13, 1909



Edmund Clarence Fiedler

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The Committee

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Stock Exchange :

GEORGE W. ELY



STEDMAN MEMORIAL MEETING

CARNEGIE LYCEUM, NEW YORK

JANUARY 13, 1909, AT FIVE IN THE AFTERNOON



ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN, MR. GILDER

The Chairman:

At an hour of pause in the stress of a tumultuous time and city we have come together to celebrate the life of a poet and to keep his memory green. It was a year ago that Edmund Clarence Stedman passed, in full strength, as he had wished, beyond the veil.

Though his song and service were for the nation and the English tongue, he was *our* poet in a close and peculiar sense. Though he sang of New England and of the Carib sea, and of that no-man's-land of the poet which is the land of all men and of all times, he chanted ballads and lyrics of our own town; he echoed its spirit, in the early and the later day; he put into forms of poetic art its love of heroes and love of country—in war time and in times of peace.

The great world knew the singer and the scholar. We, his neighbors and familiars, knew the unflagging worker; the man of letters ever ready to help those of his craft who, even without warrant, claimed his sympathy and time; and ever ready to toil early and late for the good of his craft at large. We knew the devoted friend, the manly heart that took bravely the shocks of fate.

He filled with force and wit many parts, but his membership of the mystic brotherhood of bards—it is this that makes him

dearest and ranks him highest. Because his voice was as the voice of the sweet-voiced pipe, and again as the voice of the trumpet, it is our duty to keep him in public remembrance, and honor, and regard.

By this meeting to-day we say to one another and to the world: here is one who spoke wisely and nobly of the poetic art; here is one whose virile lyrics and stirring ballads are ever to be cherished in the treasury of our New World song.

In this year of Lincoln's centennial, may it not be said that if for nothing else he will be remembered for his poems to and about Lincoln, and, having in mind one of his most nearly perfect poems, may we not say that, haply, by "The Hand of Lincoln" he will be led into enduring fame. Listen, again, to its noble close:

"Lo, as I gaze, the statured man,
Built up from yon large hand, appears:
A type that Nature wills to plan
But once in all a people's years.

"What better than this voiceless cast
To tell of such a one as he,
Since through its living semblance passed
The thought that bade a race be free!"

We are here to-day not merely to mourn for one of whom, though it seemed to us that he died untimely, it can yet be said:

His life was generous as his life was long;
Full to the brim of friendship and of song.

POEM BY MR. MORRIS

The Chairman:

Mr. Harrison S. Morris of Philadelphia, the poet, writes to Miss Laura Stedman:

“I hope the Memorial Meeting will bring back to the friends of your grandfather some sense of the noble things he did in poetry and prose, and thus stimulate, thro’ them, a large public tribute to his enduring talents. He was one of my most venerated friends. He did me loving and beautiful service and I have honor forever in the light from his indulgent associations.”

He sends this sonnet which I shall read:

Here may we lay our garlands on your hearse;
Here may we hail you lofty, loved, revered;
Here, with the leaves of grief, forever grand,
Bound on our brows, make dirges of our verse.
Gone is the voice we knew of clear converse,
Gone is the vision, memory unsphered,
Semblance and vestment, all that was endeared
Sunk in the ashes of the universe.
Yet like the white bud of the fragile Spring,
Up from the embers of Eternity,
Wind blown but steadfast—lo! a little thing,
Friendship—the seed you sowed unthinkingly,
Here in the hand of Death, o’ershadowing,
Long lies, and friendship, evermore to be.

POEM BY ARTHUR STEDMAN

The Chairman:

Mr. Stedman’s son, Arthur, who survived his father but a little while, wrote of him:

Sicilian Muses! Say that Pan is dead,
Who wandered where the lofty towers arise
That mark the contest for a lesser prize,
The while he wore the laurels on his head.
Far from Sicilian Arethuse he fled,
Yet oft returned and viewed with loving eyes
The spring perennial that all drouth defies,
From sacred courses by Apollo fed.

Say that a nymph and fawn, erstwhile so gay,
Who loved to dance the while he played or sung—
And gathered reeds his pan-pipes to prepare—
Now through the oaks make this their plaintive lay;
Sadly they walk, with heads and hands down hung,
And breathe their sorrow to the silent air.

LETTER FROM MR. WINTER

The Chairman:

Mr. Franklin H. Sargent will read to you a letter from one of Mr. Stedman's oldest friends, Mr. William Winter, who is unable to be present:

Mr. Sargent:

Mr. Gilder has just handed to me this letter which I am very glad to have the honor of reading, as one of the younger generation who profited greatly by Mr. Stedman's advice and help.

"My Dear Mr. Gilder:

"It is with deep regret that I find myself compelled to forego the privilege, which has been kindly offered to me, of testifying, by my presence and speech, to the respect and affection with which I cherish the memory of Stedman.

"He and I met and became friends in youth, and our friendship continued till the end of his days; nor can I believe that even death has broken it. He seems near to me at all times, and his example is a constant encouragement and source of strength.

"There are voices, far more eloquent than mine, to proclaim the nobility of his character, the power and poise of his intellect, the integrity of his conduct, the amplitude of his learning, and the charm of a genius which touched alike the chords of humor and pathos and possessed an equal control of both.

“Your auditors will rejoice in the assurance,—though they will not need it,—that, throughout a various and laborious career, of more than threescore years and ten, he was faithful to every duty; that he bore prosperity with meekness; that he met adversity with an undaunted and unconquerable spirit; that his devotion to good works never ceased nor faltered; that he stretched forth the hand of kindness toward struggling talent wherever it appeared; that whether in the tumult of business or the serenity of art he preserved a perfect self-possession and diffused a beneficent influence; and that his life was gentle and beautiful.

“If I were speaking I should feel constrained to place a particular emphasis upon his firm, tranquil maintenance, amid all the hardships, distractions, and discouragements of the bleak and stormy period through which, side by side, we passed together, of a passionate faith in the poetic art, and of a fine, clear, exalted spirit, knowing itself ordained to the ministration of beauty, and willing to make any and every sacrifice in the fulfilment of its sacred mission.

“The time in which he entered on the vocation of Literature was savagely unpropitious. The forces surrounding the whole of his progress were those of a cruel materialism,—forces which are somewhat less obstructive now, but which are still regnant and still potentially pernicious. They could not deject his mind nor abate his ardor. He steadfastly adhered to the stately, lovely, ancient traditions of English poetry,—to the standard set by such great and various authors as Dryden and Gray, Goldsmith and Campbell, Shelley and Keats,—and he fed the flame that never can be quenched, on the altar of that divine art.

“Something I would have added, as to the place and duty of the man of letters,—a place that he nobly filled; a duty that he nobly performed. Something else, I might have said of the affection that subsisted between him and me, and of the words of encouragement that we often spoke to one another: but let these lines of my own suffice to denote the truth that was known to him, and the feeling that I would gladly have uttered had I been able to join in your memorial service:

Honor's plaudit, Friendship's vow
Did not coldly wait till now:

All my love could do to cheer
Warmed his heart when he was here.

Faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WINTER."

A SONG OF STEDMAN'S SUNG BY MR. BISPHAM

The Chairman:

Mr. David Bispham has generously expressed a desire to take part in this gathering. It has been somewhat difficult to select from the many songs of Mr. Stedman which have been set to music something fitting the occasion. He will sing more than one. The first will be "Creole Lover's Song," which twenty-five years ago was so widely known. We shall be delighted to hear it again from the lips of so great an artist. The setting, like that of the other song Mr. Bispham will sing, is by Dudley Buck.

Mr. David Bispham; song:

CREOLE LOVER'S SONG

"Night wind, whispering wind,
Wind of the Carib sea!
The palms and the still lagoon
Long for thy coming soon;
But first my lady find:
Hasten, nor look behind!
To-night Love's herald be.

"The feathery bamboo moves,
The dewy plantains weep;
From the jasmine thickets bear
The scents that are swooning there,
And steal from the orange groves
The breath of a thousand loves
To waft her ere she sleep.

“And the lone bird’s tender song
That rings from the ceiba tree,
The firefly’s light, and the glow
Of the moonlit waters low,—
All things that to night belong
And can do my love no wrong
Bear her this hour for me.

“Speed thee, wind of the deep,
For the cyclone comes in wrath!
The distant forests moan;
Thou hast but an hour thine own,—
An hour thy tryst to keep,
Ere the hounds of tempest leap
And follow upon thy path.

“Whisperer, tarry a space!
She waits for thee in the night;
She leans from the casement there
With the star-blooms in her hair,
And a shadow falls like lace
From the fern-tree over her face,
And over her mantle white.

“Spirit of air and fire,
To-night my herald be!
Tell her I love her well,
And all that I bid thee, tell,
And fold her ever nigher
With the strength of my soul’s desire,
Wind of the Carib sea.”

ADDRESS BY MR. MABIE

The Chairman:

We shall now have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Hamilton Wright Mabie on Stedman as a Man of Letters.

Mr. Hamilton Wright Mabie:

Mr. Stedman belongs with those who have not only enriched literature with work of quality and substance, but who have represented it in its public relations. There have been delicate and sensitive craftsmen possessed of the magic that evidences without explaining itself; and there have been other craftsmen who have made the art of writing the subject of minute study, and the function of literature a matter of definition and exposition. To this class belong Emerson, Lowell, Stedman among others; writers who have given us joy in the play of the creative imagination, and revealed the place and power of literature as an expression of the human spirit. The spiritual service of the Man of Letters who has the sense of the large relations of his profession and is its ambassador, Stedman rendered with rare intelligence and devotion and with extraordinary completeness. It was, indeed, a vital part of his achievement; not so much a function as an inevitable expression of his view of life and art. A glance at his work from this point of view will bring out his manifold relations as Man of Letters to his time; and, at the same time, his vitality, his vivid sense of life in action, his gift for celebrating the heroism that in a swiftly kindled fire of emotion reveals the kinship of men in the exigencies of life. Out of this sense of concrete relations his truest songs rose, and in it his instinct for the public as well as the private service of his art has had its root.

He was a representative man in the municipal sense; a Man of Letters who was a citizen, not a mere sojourner in the metropolis. On the twenty-fifth day of February, fifty-seven years ago, at a meeting in memory of James Fenimore Cooper, arranged by a committee of which Washington Irving was chairman, Webster presided and made a commonplace speech with such majesty of bearing that the audience accepted the manner for the matter and listened with rapt attention. But it fell to the lot of William Cullen Bryant to make the occasion memorable by an address admirable alike for its precision of statement and for its nobility of diction. With that meeting, the most important that had occurred in the literary history of New York, its foremost men of letters were associated. Cooper had tried his hand on an English subject in the conventional way and had failed; he had taken an American background close at hand, an American type and an American story, and had made one of those successes which are not only distinct achievements but mark the divergence into fresh fields. One of the earliest Americans to measure dispassionately the attainments of the new against the accomplishments of the older world, and, to tell the truth with perhaps some relish for its bitterness, he paid the penalty of dealing frankly with provincial standards and feelings. His popularity had gone, but his fame was secure.

Irving, too, had felt the anger of a community which resented the translation of its ancestral worship into a humorous mythology; but his genial sentiment and his distinction on both sides the Atlantic had transformed the wrath of a provincial society into pride in the possession of so famous a person. Urbanity, the sign and seal of the man of the town, was the quality alike of his nature and his work. There must be many present to-day who can still hear the musical tones in which George William Curtis brought back the once familiar figure of Irving in a few lightly touched phrases: "Forty years ago, upon a pleasant afternoon, you might have seen, tripping with elastic step along Broadway, in New York, a figure which even then would have been called quaint. It was a man about sixty-six or sixty-seven years old; of a rather solid frame; wearing a Talma, as a short cloak

of the period was called, that hung from his shoulders; and low shoes, neatly tied, that were observable at a time when boots were generally worn. The head was slightly inclined to one side, the face was smoothly shaven, and the eyes twinkled with kindly humor and shrewdness. There was a chirping, cheery, old-world air in the whole appearance, an undeniable Dutch aspect, which, in the streets of New Amsterdam, irresistibly recalled Diedrich Knickerbocker." . . . This was Irving, "the American of his time universally known."

Of a very different aspect and bearing was Bryant, whose slight figure, alert step and beautiful Homeric head were familiar on Broadway thirty-five years ago. There are other names in the middle period, many others in the later period, which would star this record if it aimed to do more than recall the succession of men of gift and grace who have sustained the literary tradition in the metropolis, and with whom, by virtue of his gifts and representative character, Edmund Clarence Stedman belongs. Like Cooper, Irving, and Bryant he stood before the community as an exponent and representative of a great profession. Like Bryant he was of New England descent; like Cooper and Bryant he bore the stamp of old New England education; like them, he felt a vivid interest in public affairs; in common with his three distinguished predecessors he shared the sense of the responsibility for and pride in the dignity and significance of literature as an individual achievement, and as a social force and function.

Stedman was by instinct and temperament a man of the town, and we commemorate him here to-day because his work was done and his laurels were won here. If he sometimes sighed for the ample margins about the pages of the Book of Life on which some writers make their notes in the wide leisure of tranquil days, he never ceased to love the stir of life, swift and of a passionate energy, about him. He was never of those who decry the metropolis because its hands are full; he was of those who believe that some of the divinest visions come to men who deal strongly with the realities. He was never far from the scene of action, nor from the companionship of men of parts and vigor. In the short-lived Bohemia which was localized in New

York—gay with the ready humor of youth, but never without a background of honest work—his was a brave and spirited figure; eager, assertive, full of jest, quick in retort, ready alike for hot debate of the subtlest points of art or for the give and take of that speech between equals which can be pungent without the touch of malice. They were neither recluses nor Decadents, the young and variously-gifted group who lived in that fleeting Bohemia; they were not without self-consciousness, but if they expanded by interior impulsion, they did not escape sharp contacts with cooling judgments; nor did they nurse a lonely scholarship into that sense of solitary superiority which measures its magnitude, not by the number and sensitiveness of its relations, as science determines the rank of the living creature, but by the completeness of its detachment; and registers its elevation by the fall of temperature. There was plenty of warm blood, there were generous friendships and rivalries, loyal companionships and sudden breaches of the peace, in a group which included Stedman, Bayard Taylor, Aldrich, Stoddard, Edwin Booth, Launt Thompson, William Winter, Fitz James O'Brien, George Arnold, Henry Clapp, the "King of Bohemia," a cynic with a kind heart and blithe spirit whom Mr. Greenslet characterizes as "a hater of the brown-stone respectability of his day"; men who were, to recall Mr. Howell's happy phrase, "the liveliest in prose and loveliest in verse at that day in New York."

Of that little company, eagerly struggling to keep life and art in working relations, Stedman, Aldrich, Taylor, Stoddard, O'Brien, and Winter passed from journalism to literature and from literature to journalism with small regard for the later conventions of specialization and in apparent unconsciousness that there were any hard and fast lines between two fields which become parts of one estate when a man of talent happens to be in possession. Thompson made an honorable place for himself in American sculpture; and Booth's rare genius for interpreting the tune by the thought and the thought by the tune—to recall Emerson—gave his reading of Shakespearian verse a distinction which no other actor of his time commanded; while his impersonations were invested with romantic charm, or with the dignity of fate.

The storm of war scattered them as it scattered the little group in Charleston, in which Timrod and Hayne were touched with the promise of coming fame. Stedman's eager interest carried him to the front, and the report that he wrote the story of a battle by the light of a candle stuck in a bottle filled with gunpowder is one of those incidents that bring out the wild hazards of war and the fine inattention to conditions that goes with the concentration of a craftsman whose heart is in his work. It was an episode—that two years' work as war correspondent—but it was in the key of Stedman's steady courage and of that gallantry of spirit which was to carry him, high-minded and high-hearted, through those harder struggles in which a man holds his own without the thrill of trumpets across the field, or the vision of colors borne forward in glorious contempt of defeat and death.

Like Bryant and Lowell and a host of other men of distinction in Letters, Stedman turned to the law and for a little time struggled with its forms and maxims in the Attorney-General's office in Washington, fortunate in the early discovery that his path led in another direction. He returned to New York in 1865, and here he remained until his death; tireless alike in dealing with practical affairs, and in the practice of the art which was his real vocation. For the emphasis of his interest, the weight of his effort, the joy of his spirit were centered in literature rather than in business; and while his days were given to affairs, his nights were the harvest time of his work, when his vital energy was poured out with prodigal indifference to ease and health. He had that habit of persistent solitary work which is the secret of productivity, but he had also the sense of human fellowship which is the sign of the generous spirit that not only shares the fortunes of the race, but knows that art has given hostages to life which cannot be sacrificed without impoverishment.

This largeness of view, this sense of the broad relations of things, and the instinct for fellowship between men of the arts gave Stedman's career its wide interests and its representative character. He was one of the founders of the Authors Club, and his last public address was spoken in its rooms on New Year's

Eve not many days before his death. His membership in the Century Association dated from 1864 and in its fellowship no man was held in greater honor. He was often seen at the Players Club. He was President of the New England Society. He was poet of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of Yale University, and his "Mater Coronata" has a significant breadth of allusion and thought. He was deeply interested in the organization of literature and the arts in the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and was its President in succession to Charles Dudley Warner and Mr. Howells. He gave generously of his time and thought to a juster and more adequate recognition of literary property, and as President of the American Copyright League worked in season and out of season to convince the American people that "better than a cheap book is a book honestly come by," to recall Lowell's pithy and homely maxim. Every endeavor to forward the interests of art, of music, of literature in the metropolis had his lively interest, and, in many cases, his active support. As Chairman of the American Committee of the Keats-Shelley Memorial in Rome, he contributed greatly to the success of the movement; and a room has been furnished in his memory in the house in which Keats died, by the members of the New York Stock Exchange, with which he was long associated and of which he became chief historian. In the effort to establish the higher interests of art in their place in this country, Stedman not only bore his full share, but the shares of many whose sole concern was apparently with their private affairs. He had in rare degree the feeling of professional patriotism, the sense of responsibility for the guardianship of the interests of art. And when occasion came for the commemoration of poets, or the exposition in large terms of the art of poetry, he showed equal familiarity with the secrets of craftsmanship, the principle of structure, the long and interesting story of art development.

He was the first lecturer on the Percy Turnbull Memorial Foundation at the Johns Hopkins University, the most generous and important endowment for the Academic recognition of poetry in this country; and his lectures on "The Nature of Poetry" set the standard for a series of discussions which have

dealt with the spiritual and artistic aspects of poetry with high intelligence and breadth of view. The Dartmouth Ode reveals his inextinguishable vitality and spirit, while it sounds the notes of Academic achievement and promise:

“O masterful voice of Youth!

O faces, fresh with the light of morning skies!”

The Ode on Hawthorne has a dignity born not only of the subtle genius it commemorates but of the spiritual background against which that genius held its penetrating light; while the lines which celebrate Whittier and Bryant; the songs of remembrance written for college occasions; the “*Corda Concordia*,” read at Concord in 1881, through which, as through a lightly floating veil, one sees famous figures moving; the stirring answer to the question: “How now are the Others faring?” read at the semi-centennial of the Century Association; the fine stanzas in memory of Shelley, into which that beautiful, elusive spirit seems to have breathed something of its own ethereal grace; the few lines reverently interpreting the veiling of Emerson’s vision; the verses to Taylor, Hay, Van Dyke, and others, —all these betray the generous sense of fellowship which gave Stedman’s work its heart, and Stedman’s hand its grasp. Was ever a man more generous than he, more eager to share his fortune of judgment and influence, more quickly responsive to any appeal for recognition!

To pass from the celebration of his own immediate circle, the two “*Anthologies*” and the “*Library of American Literature*” make us aware of the breadth of his knowledge, the catholicity of his sympathy and his corporate sense of literature. In these portly volumes the critic gave place to the host in whose large knowledge and sympathy the House of Fame became as wide as the House of Life.

In the introductory paragraph of the “*Victorian Poets*” he significantly said that he hoped to derive from the work and experiences of the British poets of the previous forty years “correct ideas in respect to the aim and province of the art of Poetry”; and in the initial sentence of the “*Poets of America*”

he defined his purpose to trace "the current of poesy, deepening and widening in common with our streams of riches, knowledge, and power; to show an influence upon the national sentiment no less potent, if less obvious, than that derived from the historic records of our past; to watch the first dawning upon an eager people of 'the happy, heavenly vision men call Art.' "

This large conception of criticism, backed by that familiarity with the earlier classics without which criticism is so often individual and impressionistic, saved him from academic formalism and from the hysterias of the hour. He could define with the precision of an expert the secrets of the art of Theocritus and of Tennyson; his judgment was not affected by the confusion of voices about Poe and Whitman; he did not fall a victim to the temptation to substitute fine writing for exact characterization, to touch weakness meanly or maliciously; to borrow an air of superiority from his function, or to wear the robe of his office as if it were the garment of omniscience; and he never confused frankness of opinion with that journalistic cleverness which concerns itself, not with the quality of a book, but with its availability for irony or sarcasm or ridicule or self-exploitation. He was just, sane, and catholic. His vitality saved him from the mental and moral diseases of the time in Literature; and his deep feeling for the common fortune from the scorn which narrow professionalism feels for the things it cannot do, from the barrenness of oversophistication, and from the partial blindness of those who see art clearly but cannot feel life deeply. "We have long been busy with the critique of reason," wrote Goethe, one of the masters of the art of criticism. "I should like to see a critique of common sense. It would be a real benefit to mankind if we could convincingly prove to the ordinary intelligence how far it can go; and that is just as much as it really requires for life on this earth."

From the same broad intelligence comes another maxim which touches the secret of Stedman's criticism: "When keen perception unites itself with good will and love, it gets at the heart of men and the world; nay, it may hope to reach the highest goal of all."

No Man of Letters in this country has stood more consistently

for the dignity and high traditions of his craft than he; and no man has given his work a finer flavor of scholarship, or imparted to it more generously that largeness of view and quiet adjustment to the knowledge of the time in many departments which are possible to the student alone. If he had written occasional lyrics, or those lighter essays which are sometimes produced rapidly in leisure moments, his success would have been notable; but his work has had a substance and continuity such as no other American has achieved who has suffered any division of his vital energy. He had nothing in common with the Decadents; he was a man to the very heart of him. He was free from diseased curiosity, from that pruriency which is always thinking about vice without daring to practise it, from the sentimental egotism which makes life one long suffering, and contemporary verse so often a waving of funeral plumes. Mr. Stedman faced his experiences and bore his burdens with a quiet heroism which not only inspired admiration, but touched his work with spiritual dignity. His optimism was neither easy nor shallow; it had been tested, and it rose from a deep healthfulness of soul. It was rooted in courage and manliness. There is a ring in his books which was in the man; decision of character, pluck, and *élan* are evident to all students of his style. One feels that he could have led a forlorn hope with the brilliant audacity which often makes a defeat more splendid than a victory.

When, on public occasions, he spoke for Literature, his address had notable dignity of thought and diction. His words at such moments had the weight and gravity of manner, the sense of something large and spiritual, which characterize such verse as "The Hand of Lincoln." His gift was lyrical, his inspirations were vital; it was when he touched life, not with his hand but with his heart, that his poetry gained free and spirited movement. An expert craftsman, a devout student of his art, a poet by the strong impulsion of his nature; a singer of dauntless spirit and generous vision—these are the things he would have hoped might be said in such an hour as this; and these are the things we say to-day, not only for the love we bore him, but for the truth's sake.

The Chairman:

I am sure I speak for all when I express my gratitude for so admirable a summary of the career of our friend.

Out of his many important representative characters, that of the President of the New England Society is assumed by our distinguished fellow-citizen, Mr. Seth Low, for this especial occasion.

ADDRESS BY MR. LOW

Mr. Seth Low:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: Many years ago, when the late John Torrey was Professor of Botany in Columbia College, he said to the members of his class, of which I was one, "Young gentlemen, Chemistry is my bread and butter, but Botany is my love."

I suppose it to be literally true that Torrey the Chemist has long since been forgotten, but Torrey the Botanist enjoys a world-wide and enduring fame. From which I draw the conclusion that a man makes his mark where his heart is. And while it may be said of Edmund Clarence Stedman that the Stock Exchange gave him his bread and butter, it must certainly be said that Literature was his love. And it is because he was at home his life long in company with the immortals that we are here to-night to do honor to his memory.

Mr. Mabie has reminded you that for a season during the Civil War he was a war correspondent, and I have sometimes wondered whether the excitement incident to such a career may not have had something to do with his choice, a little later, of the Stock Exchange as the place in which he should seek for his bread and butter. For the eternal warfare of the bulls and bears, culminating now and then in a sort of financial Armageddon, may have appealed to the hidden war correspondent within the poet.

I don't know whether Mr. Stedman carried his literature into business, but I suppose he did, for it was part of him and it went wherever he went, just as its fragrance goes with the

flower. But it is certain that he never carried his business into his literature. In that high domain, with him the dominating question never was that miserable interrogation—What is all this worth?—but that always inspiring question—How can I give the worthiest expression to the best that is in me?

But I have been asked to speak of him for the moment particularly in relation to the New England Society. He was a New Englander, proud of his ancestry, and joined the Society in 1877. In 1902 and 1903 he was the Society's President, and as such he presided at the annual banquets of those years. If anyone really wants to know what manner of man he was it would not be easy to find out better than by reading now those two addresses. There you will find his delightful humor, his happy phrase, his merry anecdote, and shining out of, over and underneath all, like the sheen on satin, the literary quality that was native to the man.

He poured out of his treasury things new and old, and he handled the things new and old, not as one handles objects that you see in a museum, but as one sees things of everyday life in one's own home. There you will find also a note of good fellowship, a note of good citizenship. There you will find a note of idealism and equally of patriotism and pride in the New England stock from which he came. This is what he said of it at one occasion:

"We are told that in the section from which it is derived the Colonial stock is now in the minority; but in those dear old states that masterful strain will hold its own. Just as surely as the Saxon words in the English language, though outnumbered tenfold by accretions from all tongues, give to the peerless English speech its strength and tenderness, so surely will the convictions of self-denial, of morals, and the independent mind of that ancestry ever dominate the life and nature of New England, and the New England spirit will survive wherever its exiles are found."

What was said by Edmund Clarence Stedman to the New England Society of New York a year or so ago, he still says to the New England Society and to all the people of New York, and so shall he continue to say while the Saxon words of our peerless English speech give it its strength and sweetness.

ADDRESS BY COLONEL CHURCH

The Chairman:

Mr. Stedman as a friend was not known better by any living man than by Col. William C. Church.

Col. William C. Church:

In the later years of his life Mr. Stedman was accustomed to refer to me as among the very oldest, and perhaps with the exception of William Winter the oldest, of his friends in the sense of long personal acquaintance. I have but a dim recollection of him at the time before the Civil War and during the War, but as I look back over the long vista of years he comes first distinctly to my mind in the year 1866.

At that time we formed two of a little clique, as you may call it, of men more or less interested in or associated with literature who were living in the block on the south side of Tenth Street running from opposite St. Mark's churchyard to Third Avenue. Next to my house was Mr. Stedman's, and just beyond him was Richard Grant White, and in the next house Mr. Armstrong, at that time a member of the Scribner firm. And there were others near by associated in congenial pursuits. So we formed what it is almost impossible to find in the New York of these days—a little neighborhood of friends of congenial associations in constant intercourse with one another.

There I learned to know Stedman intimately. For forty-five years we were associated together in the Century Club. He used to come there to meet me frequently. New York life, you know, is such that you have to see your friends to a considerable extent at the Club. We were together socially, and it is very pleasant for me to remember now that during all that long and

constant intercourse there was never an unpleasant word passed between us. Our relations were not always those that promote harmony; they were those of editor and author, but never was a word spoken in any way that either of us could regret or wish to forget, and so I remember Edmund Clarence Stedman with a warmth of affection that makes it extremely difficult for me to speak of him without emotion.

I have listened with great interest to what Mr. Mabie has said, and I endorse every word of all he said regarding Mr. Stedman's personal characteristics. One thing about Mr. Stedman is to be noted, he was entirely free from anything in the nature of jealousy. No man was more anxious than he to help those about him, or more generous. There was no limit to the trouble he would take to oblige his friends and to help particularly those who appealed to him under the call of authorship, and he possibly, as much if not more than any other man, assisted to establish the dignity of authorship in this city and throughout the country.

When I go back to the early days of my friendship with Stedman, I remember that the literary center was in Boston. If a man could n't find entrance to the "Atlantic Monthly," he had no credit as an author. Now that is changed, and Stedman and the men who worked with him have done much to bring about that change. I never knew Stedman to speak evil or disparagingly of anyone. Critical in his tastes but most generous and kindly in his judgments, as all know, he had pity and feeling for his fellow man and he showed it at all times and under all circumstances.

Mr. Mabie has said much, and he has said it far better than I can say it, about Mr. Stedman's disposition to help others, and those who may speak of his good deeds—their name is Legion. As Mr. Mabie referred to that little episode of Bohemianism that we are all more or less familiar with in our youth, I was reminded of the days and evenings spent at Pfaff's where we would go in and shake hands with Walt Whitman. An attempt was made at that time to establish in this city a sort of cult of Bohemianism, with Harry Clapp as a leader in it, and Ada Clare—I think her name was. It had more or less interest

for us all and in spite of its cynicism there was something stimulating in the freedom of thought it encouraged, but it never really touched the heart of Stedman; it was something he turned aside by the way to enjoy for the moment, but he took no further part in it. His sturdy New England character, his strong sense of duty, his faithfulness to every obligation kept him free from any possibility of sympathetic association with that side of life. As a husband, a father, and a friend he was all that we could ask.

The reputation he has left in Wall Street, to which Mr. Low has referred, is an indication of the strength of his character. Now, literature does not always produce exactness in financial matters and fidelity to pecuniary obligations, but there was no stain on Stedman's character in that regard. He went through difficult experiences; he carried heavy burdens, but he bore them like a man, with the utmost credit to himself from whatever point of view you may consider him. He, in short, illustrated a motto that I am fond of quoting at times—"The whole of religion is in shunning what is evil, being faithful to the duties of your calling, and in all things helpful to your fellow man."

Speaking of Mr. Stedman's domestic relations, I am tempted to read what he wrote to me at the time of his wife's death. I was in San Francisco at the time, and so we communicated by letter. He said: "I have kept my vigil of over half a century, and whatever may have been my shortcomings—we are none of us worthy of our wives—I have been able to fulfil my boyish vow that the sole of my Laura's foot should never tread rough ground. As lives go, I have no right to complain, but I think the wrench of separation is the harder for the long welding together."

My last conversation with Mr. Stedman I remember with great pleasure. He was at my house one evening, and as I came down to greet him I found him standing in front of a picture painted by Sanford Gifford. Stedman asked me where I got that picture, and he said that it had been painted by Gifford especially for him. He and Gifford had been old friends, and one of his poems had been inscribed to Gifford,

who painted this picture, which had passed out of Stedman's hands. Mr. Stedman said he would write me a letter in regard to it; a courtesy such as a loyal and obliging friend, he always was ready and anxious to show.

He sent me the letter, and a few days later he came down to my office bringing a little memorandum book in which he was accustomed to enter his daily transactions of life, his expenditures, and so on, a sort of diary, and he went over it in a search for his entry in regard to this picture. As he did so the recollections of his life seemed to come up before him and he alluded to this circumstance and that with which we were both familiar.

We started for home together, and coming up, in the course of our talk, he spoke to me about the nature of God in a very interesting way. He seemed to be turning over in his mind the question of what God was, and what our relations to him were. And that was the last conversation I had with him, and I remember it, of course, with very great pleasure, because within a week he was gone.

It was an illustration of what I have often noticed in my long life, that there seems to be a sort of state of preparation into which people are brought who are about to pass out of this world—their thoughts are turned to the serious problems of life which we must all come face to face with some day, sooner or later.

I think that nothing could be more appropriate to this occasion than for me to quote here just one verse of Stedman's. At the dedication of the monument to Horace Greeley, under whom he served many years, and for whom he had great regard and affection, he said:

“ ‘Still with us!’ all the liegemen cry
Who read his heart and held him dear;
The hills declare ‘He shall not die!’
The prairies answer ‘He is here!’
Immortal thus, no dread of fate
Be ours, no vain *memento mori*:
Life, Life, not Death, we celebrate,—
A lasting presence touched with glory.”

A STATEMENT AND POEM BY MR. JOHNSON

The Chairman:

As representing the American Committee of the Keats-Shelley Memorial, Mr. Johnson will now make a statement. He will also read a poem on Mr. Stedman.

Mr. Robert Underwood Johnson:

On the 23d of February, 1903, the anniversary of the death of Keats, a group of American writers met in Rome at the banking-house of Sebasti and Reali on the Piazza di Spagna, and there organized an informal movement to buy and preserve the house in which the poet lived and died and which, as you all know, is situated near-by, at the foot of the Spanish Stairs. The chairman on that occasion was the English poet Sir Rennell Rodd, then chargé d'affaires of the British Embassy and now ambassador of his country to Italy. During his service as first secretary, he had in more than one instance done great service to lovers of poetry by thwarting various plans of vandalism—including one for the removal of the grave of Keats from its historic corner in the older portion of the beautiful Protestant cemetery and, as you know, hardly a stone's throw from that of Shelley. The house was falling into neglect and shabbiness, and these Americans, moved by a common impulse, determined not only to establish a perpetual guardianship of the graves, but to rescue the house and to make of it a shrine for the English-speaking race, and to establish there a center of poetic influence in the shape of a Memorial Library to contain in time a complete collection of the works of the two poets, and of volumes, portraits, autographs, and other objects and data relating to them or their fame.

In making choice of a chairman for the informal American

Committee, but one name was considered—that of Edmund Clarence Stedman, whose devotion to the interests of his art and his profession had long been proverbial. He accepted with alacrity, and from that moment to the day of his death the project was constantly in his thoughts and very dear to his heart. Mr. Stedman never took lightly the obligations he assumed in committee work, and there was often need of his suggestiveness and his practical judgment, for the negotiations for the property were long and complicated, and unsuspected obstacles of various kinds arose. But he lived to see the Roman house pass into the hands of the permanent Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, and to know that it would soon be open to the public, as it now is: that its library had already rich treasures in its archives, and that before many months it is to be the beneficiary of a distinguished English collector. He considered it an honor and a privilege to have a share in erecting this new altar to Poetry, and from the start it was as an honor and a privilege that the invitation to coöperate was extended to others.

It is a matter of interest to know that all the rooms in the apartment in which Keats died have been or are to be furnished with funds contributed by Americans, the fourth and largest room having been left to the last to become the occasion of a most grateful tribute to the poet, critic, and man in whose name we are met to-day. After the death of Mr. Stedman the Roman Committee expressed the earnest desire that the house might contain some memorial of him, and the outcome of this suggestion is that I have just received from Messrs. R. H. Thomas, F. K. Sturgis and G. W. Ely of the New York Stock Exchange the sum of \$2000 recently contributed by one hundred members of the Exchange for the purpose of furnishing this room in memory of their former associate. So generously to continue the unfinished work of a man is almost to prolong his life. I can think of no more appropriate tribute nor of one which, as a mark of friendship, would have been more grateful to Mr. Stedman himself. He who in body never got to Rome—never nearer than Venice—is thus at last to be forever associated in that Roman house with the two great poets whom he

understood and loved and whom in prose and verse he so worthily praised.

I shall now ask your indulgence while I read a few lines of verse which I wrote in his memory on the Keats anniversary—the 23d of February of last year—on the day when it was hoped that Mr. Stedman would be in Rome to participate in the formal dedication of the house.

TO ONE WHO NEVER GOT TO ROME

You who were once bereft of Rome
With but the Apennines between,
And went no more beyond the foam,
But loved your Italy at home
As others loved her seen:

You knew each old imperial shaft
With sculpture laureled to the blue;
Where martyr bled and tyrant laughed;
Where Horace his Falernian quaffed,
And where the vintage grew.

The Forum's half-unopened book
You would have pondered well and long;
And loved St. Peter's misty look,
With vesper chantings in some nook
Of far-receding song.

Oft had you caught the silver gleams
Of Roman fountains. To your art
They add no music. Trevi teems
With not more free or bounteous streams
Than did your generous heart.

I hoped that this Muse-hallowed day
Might find your yearning dream come true:
That you might see the moonlight play
On ilex and on palace gray
As 't were alone for you;—

That your white age might disappear
 Within the whiteness of the night,
While the late strollers, lending ear
To your young joy, would halt and cheer
 At such a happy wight;—

That you,—whose toil was never done,—
 Physicianed by the Land of Rest,
Might, like a beggar in the sun,
Watch idly the green lizard run
 From out his stony nest;—

That you, from that high parapet
 That crowns the graceful Spanish Stairs,
(Whose cadence, as to music set,
Moving like measured minuet,
 Would charm your new-world cares),

Might see the shrine you helped to save,
 And yonder blest of cypresses,
That proud above your poets wave.
Warder of all our song, you gave
 What loyalty to these!

The path to Adonais' bed,
 That pilgrims ever smoother wear,
Who could than you more fitly tread?—
Or with more right from Ariel dead
 The dark acanthus bear?

Alas! your footstep could not keep
 Your fond hope's rendezvous, brave soul!
Yet, if our last thoughts ere we sleep
Be couriers across the deep
 To greet us at the goal,

Who knows but now, aloof from ills,
 The heavenly vision that you see—
The towers on the sapphire hills,
The song, the golden light—fulfils
 Your dream of Italy!

TELEGRAMS AND LETTERS

The Chairman:

I have just received this telegram from Andrew D. White [of Mr. Stedman's class of 1853 at Yale]:

"Deeply regret that I am unable to be with you this afternoon to render a tribute to our beloved and lamented Stedman."

Dr. George M. Gould of Ithaca writes:

"I regret that I cannot come to the Memorial Meeting, to add my word of love for, and gratitude to, Edmund Clarence Stedman. He was most kind and good to me. Literature is indebted to him for high, loyal, and life-long service, and contemporary literary workers will cherish his example and memory."

This letter of regret is from the widow of his close friend, Bayard Taylor:

"It is with deep regret that my absence from New York will make it impossible for me to be present on Wednesday next at the meeting in memory of my old dear friend, Edmund Clarence Stedman.

"Not being able to be present in person, I will be with you in spirit."

STEDMAN'S "BEST POEM"

Another friend of Mr. Stedman's, Anne Partlan, has sent me what may be called a prose poem; she calls it "The Best Poem," and I shall read it:

“THE BEST POEM”

“What is your best poem?” The writer asked this question of Stedman, some years ago.

“I have not written it,” came the quick reply. “Some day when I can get away from business cares and manifold duties, I am going to write my best poem.” At that time the poet was engaged in liquidating the debts of a dying friend, by means of letters to the invalid’s numerous creditors.

Some time afterward, he was asked again if he had begun work on the best poem. “Not yet,” he responded cheerily, while writing a check payable to an invalid author, who was in the Home for Incurables.

A short time before he left us, the poet turned to the writer and said, “I have not written it and I fear I shall go soon.”

Dearly beloved poet, you were writing the Best Poem all your life, in deeds of love and kindness, and to-day it is being sung in the hearts of all whose lives are the better for the strength and cheer of which you gave so freely.

A SONG OF STEDMAN’S SUNG BY MR. BISPHAM

Mr. Bispham will now sing “The Undiscovered Country,” perhaps better known as “Shadow Land,” the setting for which is also by Dudley Buck.

Mr. David Bispham; song:

“ ‘THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY’ ”

“Could we but know
The land that ends our dark, uncertain travel,
Where lie those happier hills and meadows low,—
Ah, if beyond the spirit’s inmost cail,
Aught of that country could we surely know,
Who would not go?

“Might we but hear
The hovering angels’ high imagined chorus,
Or catch, betimes, with wakeful eyes and clear,
One radiant vista of the realm before us,—
With one rapt moment given to see and hear,
Ah, who would fear?”

“Were we quite sure
To find the peerless friend who left us lonely,
Or there, by some celestial stream as pure,
To gaze in eyes that here were lovelit only,—
This weary mortal coil, were we quite sure,
Who would endure?”

The Chairman:

I will close this memorial meeting by reading the last stanza
of Stedman’s poem on John Hay:

“And if there be—and if there be
A realm where lives still forward roll,
Even so—no other—strong and free
Through time and space shine on, dear Soul!”

POSTSCRIPT

A LETTER FROM HELEN KELLER

My dear Mr. Gilder:

I should have been glad to take part in the exercises to Mr. Stedman's memory. But your letter came the evening before the celebration, and it was too late to get off the message which I should have liked to send.

We met only a few times: but I remember him affectionately. I knew him first as a poet addressing beautiful, tender verses to me. Then his cheeriness and ready sympathy with my happy moods made him a welcome friend to the child whose entrance into new light he had so eloquently celebrated. His poems always bring me delight, so full are they of what I love—the virgin air of morn, the play of the sunbeams on lake and hill, the flight of swallows and the lusty song of robins, the radiant silence of evening. Need I say that “John Brown” moves me most of all with its fire, power, and dread prophecy?

With warm messages, I am,

Sincerely yours,

HELEN KELLER.

WRENTHAM, January twenty-seventh.

LETTER FROM MR. HOWELLS

130 West 57th St., February 5, 1909.

Dear Mr. Gilder:

I am glad to hear that there is to be a printed record of the interesting and appropriate observances at the Stedman Memo-

rial. The whole occasion was of such beauty and dignity that I found myself longing to take part in words as I took part in thoughts paralleling the reminiscences and appreciations of the speakers; but I know now, as I felt then, that I could have added nothing but my personal tribute of praise to what was so admirably and adequately said. You and your hearers were spared one of the proofs I always offer, when urged from the silence to which your kindness had left me, that I am best left to it. But now I wish you might include in what is to be printed the expression, which cannot lose by repetition, of the love and honor in which Stedman was held by the oldest literary friend present at that fine commemoration of his sincere and noble character. Not one of his least but one of his greatest qualities, I think, was his sense of the loveliness and usefulness of praise. It was a quality that consisted with what was best in his generous make; he loved to give praise no less than to receive it; and in my nearly fifty years' acquaintance with him, I never knew him to indulge the weakness and folly of contempt. There was, indeed, a certain fine severity in him, a heritage from the Puritan ancestry of which he was proud, and this again consisted with his love of praise. The whole course of his sane and just criticism was constructive through it, and incomparably valuable in literary conditions like ours where the discernment and recognition of excellences works infinitely more good than the discernment and recognition of deficiencies. No doubt he saw these, but he held his hand from hurting when he knew he could not heal; and his life was of like criticism with his word. He was a very true and constant friend; so constant that you could always find him where you left him, and so true that if there had been a difference between you he would not fail to own that the fault was his or yours, as the case might be.

He was a man whom I think we shall increasingly realize as of uncommon largeness and fineness: he did so many things beautifully and grandly. Beyond the other considerable literary men of his generation he was a scholar; and by blood and tradition he was of the high New England Brahminical caste. But New York had somehow kept him different from the elder Bostonians with whom he may be ranked; and subject as he was to

the indiscriminating veneration of the world outside literature in which his lot was cast, he remained in the last analysis very unconscious, though he always liked to talk of what he was thinking and doing.

His memory is very dear. I wish he could have known, the other day, how it was cherished. Perhaps he did know.

Yours sincerely,

W. D. HOWELLS.

LETTER FROM MR. WAYNE MACVEAGH

Mr. Wayne MacVeagh, of Mr. Stedman's class at Yale (1853), replied to an invitation to take part in the exercises that his health would not permit him to remain North. He said:

"Hardly any occasion could give me more joy than the one you offer, that of talking for a few moments to a sympathetic group of men like-invited with myself, of dear Stedman whom I knew and loved for over half a century, and whose soul was never in the market-place nor wedded to what Lord Bacon calls its 'idols,' but was at home, in the true sense, in the guild of literature to which you are happy in belonging."

NOTE

"The friends and intimate associates of Edmund Clarence Stedman—men who had known him and his work—gathered yesterday in Carnegie Lyceum to pay tribute to his memory. . . . The meeting was [initiated by the Century Club and] held under the auspices of the Century and Authors' clubs, the New England Society, the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the New York Stock Exchange. . . . The stage decorations, arranged by A. W. Drake, consisted of a row of boxwood trees in big copper cups covering the footlights and a background of the larger bay trees. At one side, incased in wreaths, was a copy [by Wm. H. Lippincott] of the portrait of Stedman by T. W. Wood."

The above excerpt is from the account given the following morning in the New York "Tribune."

Mr. Alexander W. Drake's arrangement for the stage was carried out by Mr. Warendorff. The portrait was framed in laurel and draped with purple and gold—the colors of the Academy of Arts and Letters. At the opposite corner, to the back of the stage, a large copper bowl (loaned, as were the row of Russian copper jardinières, by Mr. Drake) contained branches of yellow forsythia.

The "Tribune" continues:

"Among those present in the audience were Henry Clews, Andrew Carnegie, William Dean Howells, Dr. Thomas L. Stedman, a cousin of the poet and executor of his will; Miss Laura Stedman, the poet's granddaughter; Mrs. Ellen Douglas Stedman, Judge Henry E. Howland, T. A. Janvier, Mme. Martha Bianchi, Charles G. Whiting, of 'The Springfield Republican'; Mrs. Henry Harland, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson S. Easton and Seumas MacManus, the Irish author."

In the audience, moreover, were Mrs. Jefferson Winter ("Elsie Leslie"), daughter-in-law of William Winter, Mr. and Mrs. Charles DeKay, Major Emory S. Turner. Also members of the Dodge and Porter families, kinspeople of Mr. Stedman, Mr. Clarence C. Buel, Dr. Rossiter Johnson, the Rev. Dr. Slicer, Mr. and Mrs. Charles

Henry Phelps, Mr. and Mrs. C. F. W. Mielatz, Mrs. Steele Mackaye, and her son Percy Mackaye, the poet and playwright; Royal Cortissoz, the Rev. James M. Whiton, of the Yale class of '53; Mr. and Mrs. David Lloyd, Mrs. C. Griswold Bourne, Ridgely Torrence, William H. McElroy, Logan G. McPherson, Mr. and Mrs. Farrand D. Brower, Mrs. Laurence Turnbull, who, with her husband, was the founder at Johns Hopkins University, of the Percy Turnbull Lectureship of Poetry, whose initial lectures Mr. Stedman delivered; Mrs. William C. Church, Jonathan Trumbull, of Norwich, Conn.; Mrs. R. W. Gilder and members of her family; Miss Louise Watson Clark, Mr. Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, Dr. Titus Munson Coan, Mr. Miles Standish, Mr. Stephen Henry Thayer, Prof. Wm. M. Sloane, Secretary of the Century Association, and other representatives of the various organizations under whose auspices the Meeting was held.

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